

James Earl Ray revisited

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JAMES EARL RAY: "If the warden knew how I got out, ask how come he waited 24 hours before reporting me missing."

James Earl Ray, alleged assassin of Martin Luther King, Jr., is now the literary property of William Bradford Huie, crime-police reporter, novelist and currently writing Ray's "biography" in LOOK magazine installments. Huie paid Ray an estimated \$25,000 for the exclusive rights.

Mr. Huie's work is exceedingly dangerous—for him, for Ray, and for us, the PUBLIC. The two articles published so far in LOOK (issues 23, 24) are the methodical and painstaking tracking of Ray's activities from the time of his jail break from a St. Louis penitentiary up until the assassination of Dr. King. Huie has spoken to prostitutes, restaurant owners, the doctor who did plastic surgery on Ray's nose, and has come up with a fairly convincing time-table and route that the accused killer travelled. Moreover, Mr. Huie continually stresses the fact that every witness he spoke to who had anything whatsoever to do with Ray had not yet been contacted by any government investigating agents or agencies—according to Huie, the FBI is nowhere in sight on this case.

There is no doubt as to Huie's sincere intentions and as to the fact that he will probably dig up a lot more than would have been uncovered otherwise. However, while he very carefully checks out the details (or so it appears) which Ray has presented to him in private \$25,000 letters, it is quite possible that James Earl Ray is building a solid alibi through the pages of a national magazine and the reputation of a writer of some importance. Huie, by publishing his findings (based on Ray's clues) authenticates to some extent, i.e. in print, this other life which Ray wishes to pass off—and the fact of publication then tends to confirm in the general public and in a jury's mind what

the writer has said, whether it is proved or not.

The Plot So Far

According to Huie's article, Ray made his way to Canada through Detroit and then Windsor, Ontario. Just by chance, he met a Latin (a blonde-haired Latin, an unusual aspect in Latin America) who called himself "Raoul." "Raoul" offered Ray money to drive packages—undisclosed content—into the United States and then to do the same thing into Mexico and back. What is unusual, as Ray himself points out to Huie in the letters, is that "Raoul" paid him an exorbitant amount, much too high for merely driving what was presumably "dope" into the United States. It is possible to conclude from the madcap manner in which the "packages" were driven into Mexico and back (they would switch



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cars, then switch tires in cars, etc.) that "Raoul" was checking Ray out for stamina, etc., and also work of any nature. But more important "Raoul" gave Ray a phone number in New Orleans where he could be reached at certain times. New Orleans, one will recall is the city Jim Garrison contends spawned the conspiracy to kill President Kennedy. Another city involved in the Ray case, a city to which he went to establish an alibi and some "I.D." was Los Angeles. There

he enrolled in dancing lessons and bartending school while living on an income whose source is unknown. Los Angeles is another city which Garrison attempted to extradite a man named Eugene Bradley who was supposedly involved with wealthy right-wingers who were in turn involved with the president's assassination. Garrison contends that Kennedy was killed by anti-Castro Batista-prone Cubans, linked with the CIA, who had either taken part in the Bay of Pigs fiasco and were mad at Kennedy for not giving all out air support to the invasion forces, or were involved in the training of those which failed to overtake Castro.

According to one of my sources, and a rumor which I have not

been able to verify as of this writing, one of the attorneys who worked on the release of the prisoners (Cuban exiles trained in the U.S. and Guatemala by CIA personnel and on the CIA payroll) after the Bay of Pigs invasion failed, was given as a reward for his services in the swap of prisoners, the post of being warden in a penitentiary in St. Louis—and by strange co-incidence, it is the same penitentiary from which Ray escaped. I had heard this rumor, from a very reputable source, before the Huie articles appeared. What was quite shocking in the diagram Ray sent Huie on how he escaped was that Ray had written "If the warden knew how I got out, ask him how come he waited 24 HOURS before he reported me missing." (my italics) This statement Huie writes off by saying that the warden had thought Ray still to be on the premises of the prison, even though he knew the break had been made. Whatever Happened to the Second Oswald?

If we are to take Ray's story, as told to Huie, that he was used merely as a decoy in King's assassination, and that he never fired a shot (let alone suspected that there was to be an assassination involved!) a noticeable pattern begins to appear with strik-

ing similarities to the Kennedy assassination. William Turner, a former FBI investigator who has been working with Garrison in New Orleans, writes in RAM-PARTS:

The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King on April 4th presents a series of striking parallels to the Kennedy case. A rifle with a telescopic sight was conveniently dropped at the crime scene. Just as the Carcano left in the Texas School Depository Building was readily traceable to Oswald, so the Remington jettisoned outside the dingy hotel from which King was shot was readily traceable to Eric Starvo Galt (whom the FBI subsequently identified as James Earl Ray, a 1967 escapee from a Missouri prison). In both instances, also, it appears that the police radio network was penetrated. Within minutes after the President was shot, the Dallas police radio was broadcasting a description of a suspect—he generally resembled Oswald—that to this day is of unknown origin. Within minutes after the King shooting, the Memphis police radio was broadcasting a police chase of a white mustang thought to be the getaway car; police spokesmen say now that the chase never took place.

What occurred, quite obviously, was that in both cases a citizen-band radio broke into the police wave and gave mis-information allowing confusion and chaos to brook any proper police chase of the real assassin (or assassins). More important, if Ray's claim, again through Hule's published articles, is correct, that he was

in fact a decoy and didn't even know that there was an assassination involved (which is extraordinarily unlikely)—the similarities between the two "assassins", Oswald and Ray, becomes even more magnified. Oswald claimed (and his mother added to the claim more vociferously after Oswald's TV-murder) that he was just a 'patsy': Ray is claiming the same.

Most recently, Ray switched lawyers from Arthur Haines, former mayor of Birmingham, Alabama, to Percy Foreman, high-priced attorney from the Big 'D', Dallas. Haines, who was asked for by name by Ray from his prison cell in Britain when he was first taken into custody, is supposedly being paid with the \$25,000 Ray is getting from reporter Hule for the exclusive story. But Haines, of course, was hired by Ray before there was even the idea that Ray would get \$25,000 from a free lance magazine writer. How had he expected to pay Haines (who incidentally expressed the profoundest surprise that Ray should have chosen him)? How does Ray expect to pay Foreman, who was quoted in a New York TIMES interview as saying "If my clients are wealthy when they come to me, they sure are poor when they leave"?

The case has now been postponed until March 3' of 1969. Foreman was granted 111 days by

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Photo by Bill Warren

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W. Preston Battle, the Memphis judge, to prepare his case. The entire lawyer-hassle was obviously an astute move by Ray, or possibly by someone who is controlling Ray's in-court life, to prolong investigation of the assassination of Martin Luther King.

It is difficult at this point to prognosticate what will happen next in the case. Maybe Jack Ruby will be brought back from the grave and we can have a late-night re-run of a famous 1963 TV special which is engraved somewhere in the back of all our minds.